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[Zimmerman.]



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Miscellanea.

THE war has taken a heavy toll of the Congregation of the Passion, as of most other religious institutes. More than four hundred professed members of the Congregation, priests, students, and lay brothers, are at the present moment engaged in the firing line or on ambulance duty or in some other military capacity, while several of our priests of various nationalities are doing duty as chaplains to the troops. When it is remembered that the number so employed make a very large proportion of the total membership of the Congregation, it will be guessed how terribly this disastrous struggle has affected the interests of at least one religious Order. Still it is but one: many others have suffered a like depletion in numbers whose vocation binds them to work in the service of the God of Peace. The thought should surely be sufficient of itself to add fervour to the prayers of all Catholics for the speedy termination of this disastrous war.

One of the most remarkable books among the voluminous literature published in connection with the war is the sensational volume lately given to the public in France under the title "The Conversion of a Catholic Germanophile." The convert in question is M. Emile Prüm, a prominent Luxembourg Catholic, who before the war and even up to a recent date was the devoted friend of Germany. The most interesting part of the little book is an "Open Letter" addressed by M. Prüm to M. Erzberger, a leader of the German Catholics, whose name has more than once been mentioned in our pages. In our March number we quoted and commented on an article of his advocating a more brutal and unscrupulous prosecution of the war on the part of Germany: the very truculence of that article seems to have been the last straw which broke the back of M. Prüm's pro-Germanism. The result was the open letter to his fellow-Catholic, which, though suppressed in Germany, has been published in France, with the addition of some illuminating details.

* * *

The book throws a peculiar light upon the much vaunted Catholicism of some leading German Catholics, who apparently give politics the precedence of faith. Even their religious newspapers, it seems, are not slow to take part in the campaign of hate against the enemies who would baulk Germany of its world empire. And in certain secular journals to which Catholics such as Erzberger are well-known contributors, we find such insane blasphemies as that in which a writer speaks of "a saviour who is German, for at this time when the world can be cured only by the German essence there can be no strength or stay but in a German saviour. . . . In Christ all is German even to the marrow of his bones."

* * *

One of the chief objects of the hatred of those German Catholics is their Catholic neighbour, Belgium. Little wonder perhaps: for that crucified nation will be a perpetual reproach to them, the more so as its fate seems to have been foreseen by them and deliberately calculated. Else what are we to think of the declaration of M. Erzberger, then occupying an official position in connection with the war Budget, made less than twelve months before war broke out? Asked by representatives of Belgium what truth was in the rumoured intention of Germany to violate Belgian neutrality in case of war with France, he gave his "word of honour, pledging his conscience as a Catholic, that never in the most secret deliberations has there been any question of invading Belgium. Neither the government nor the military authorities have allowed any infraction of the duties imposed on Germany by treaty to enter into their plans. . . . Belgium may always count on the faithful sympathy of German Catholics. She may always rely on the Centre Party in the Reichstag . . . and upon their exerting themselves to see that international engagements are respected." Recent history is a curious commentary on the sincerity of this declaration, and should give any pro-German Catholics that may still be left amongst us matter for serious thought.

An Awakening.

MARY STANDISH dismounted from her bicycle and examined the back tyre, to find, as she had expected, that it was badly punctured, and she remembered with a sinking of the heart that she had left her little outfit box on the hall table. Over four long Irish miles stretched between her and the humble cottage in the County Limerick village which was all that represented "home" to her now. She would not even pass a police barracks or a village forge—those two havens of hope for the country cyclist—and so she walked forward wheeling her cycle. She was tired and hot, for the June evening was warm, and it was near her tea hour, but she was too well used to such minor discomforts to mind much.

She had come down from Dublin to the village of Ballywen as district nurse, a little over a year ago, and she had arrived with a very sore heart—fresh from the biggest trouble of her life, crushed, humiliated—wretched in body and soul.

Her mind went back now to the past—as alas! it was inclined to do but too often—back to the dear old days and the happy slum-work, to which she had devoted herself heart and soul, going gladly in and out of the foul alleys and noisome garrets where so many of the Dublin poor are crowded together under such terrible conditions. But she loved the work, and the days were but too short for all she wanted to get through.

And then there had been *he*—her king amongst men, her ideal, and alas! her idol.

"Remember I have set you on a pedestal, and I don't want you ever to fall off it!" she had said to him once, half serious, half jesting, and he had answered nothing, only his hand tightened round hers. Never to fall off his pedestal? Alas! poor feet of clay!

She remembered now the icy feeling of horror with which she gradually realized that he was "cooling off" as some of the nurses in the District Home expressed it. Then she heard other remarks, not meant for her ears, but reaching them all the same, as these remarks generally manage to do.

"Oh! he never meant anything! He didn't think much of her anyhow to drop her like that! He can't have any respect for her," and so on. O, the agony of it! She shivered even now in the June sunshine as it all came back to her.

Well! she had written to him, feeling sure that it was some misunderstanding, some trifle that had come between them and could easily be cleared away. And then the sword fell. He had "never meant anything but friendship."

Friendship! Was it friendship to hold her in his arms and kiss her—to sit for long evenings together and talk hand

in hand and heart to heart? He had "never mentioned marriage to her," he told a mutual friend. True, the word was never mentioned, but did he think that she, with all her ideals of love and marriage, would ever suffer his caresses just to pass away an idle hour? O! what must he have thought of her? She writhed in an agony of humiliation at the bare remembrance.

Mary Standish had walked in her Gethsemane during those days of misery. At first she had felt so stunned with this unbelievable thing that had come upon her, that she was incapable of feeling; it seemed to her as if she was dragging her own dead body about with her—a thing insentient, dead and cold. Then came the gradual realization, the dawn of days of loneliness and pain, but above and beyond all—greater even than the heart-hunger for his presence, for the touch of his hand, the sound of his voice—greater than all was the humiliation, the mental torture, when she saw her pride crushed and her self-respect shivered to atoms. Then came the cry of the wounded heart, "I must go away—oh! I must go away!"

And so she had gone to her superior and asked for a change of work, either in England or a country district.

The lady listened quietly. She saw at once that something had gone wrong, but she was a wise woman, and confined herself to speaking about several districts likely soon to be vacant.

"But I want to get away at once—at once! Oh! Miss Despard, are there none vacant *now*?"

Yes, there was this little village in the south, would she go? It was a heavy cycling district, there was no society of any sort, and there were other drawbacks—if she would wait for a little while, one of the better districts might—

"O, Miss Despard I will go to Ballywen! I don't care *where* it is, only let me go soon!"

"Very well, Nurse, I'll write and arrange to-day. Of course I can see that you are in trouble, and if I can be of any use—"

"Oh! no, thank you, it is nothing—nothing! I will be all right when I am gone from here!"

That was her one idea. To be gone from those places so full of memories and associations. To be safe from the dread of meeting him, from recognising his walk in the distance, from a chance encounter in tram or street.

And so a few hurried days passed, and with no good-byes but to a few real friends, she had slipped quietly off one lovely May morning by an early train.

She could never look back to that day on which she left the city of all her heart's desires behind her, without a sick feeling of pain. The remembrance of it all came back to her now as part of some hideous nightmare. The train journey during which she had gazed out of the windows with miserable unseeing eyes, the arrival at the little country station where she was met by the usual ramshackle convey-

ance, and the long drive—unending it had seemed to the city-bred girl—to the little village where her future work was to lie. How she hated it all!

Mary Standish was a convert to the Church, and in spite of the loss of friends and of a moderate share of this world's goods, she had been unspeakably happy in her religion—happy as, perhaps, only a convert can be. And now she suddenly found herself face to face with utter spiritual desolation—with a sense of being shut out from Heaven and God—as if His Face was turned from her and as if Our Blessed Lady and the Saints were as hard and cold as their own statues. And her religion had been so dear to her! Her daily Communions—oh! what strength and comfort they had given her for her daily work. And then how often she would slip in to Church for a few minutes with the dear Prisoner of Love in the tabernacle—if it was only just for a few words. Then there were her various Sodality meetings, her temperance work, her manifold charitable activities. Yes, her religion had indeed been dear to her, it had been part of herself: she had loved it with a love exceeding great, and many a time it had been her help and stay in time of trial and discouragement. But not now—not now! Her heart was like a rock, she could not pray—she entered no church. But she held by the faith still, she clung to her religion at least by conviction: that she would never lose, and she remembered one terrible night when she had lain awake through the dark hours waiting for the dawn, and the temptation had come to her to end it all, to be done with this life—this life of such unbearable pain. Her eyes had pierced the darkness to where her nurse's bag, with its hypodermic syringe and case of tabloids, lay. She had a selection of poisons there—enough to kill a regiment. She had sat up in bed suddenly. Should she? Her religion told her that she would awake in hell. Well! what of it? It wouldn't be a worse hell than this she was going through now. That thought would not deter her. But suddenly the light from the street lamp showed her the little brass crucifix on the wall, and it was as if a voice suddenly said—"He died for you—your life is not your own but His!"

And shivering she lay down again, to lie watching with weary eyes for the dawn—the dawn that alas! only brought to her the beginning of another day of misery. It was well that she did not lose her faith altogether at this time, and never had she been more in danger of doing so. For *he* had been a Catholic, and a good one. How proud she had always been of him because he was a practical Catholic—a man that was not ashamed of the faith that was in him. And then—he could do this thing! Oh! was there any truth or goodness to be found in Heaven above or on earth!

Well! that had all passed. She had gone to Confession on her last day in the city and had laid her soul bare to her confessor with all its grief and bitterness.

"And Father," she ended, "don't ask me to go to Holy Communion for I can't—oh! I can't!"

But her confessor had known her for years, and knew how to deal with her. So before she left the confessional she had promised to receive Holy Communion on the following morning. And she had done so, but no consolation had come to her, it was as though her soul could feel no more, as if it lay dead and withered within her.

Over a year ago now, and in spite of frequent Communion, of prayers which she *tried* to say, of mortifications which she laid upon herself—still the same dryness, the same spiritual desolation. Her religion was her duty now—once it had been her joy.

Yet she was trying to do what was right, trying to

Take up her burden of life again,
Saying only—it might have been.

And nothing remained to her of the past, but a sore heart which, so far, time had failed to heal, a more cynical outlook on the world in general, and a locket with a slender chain which she always wore and which contained a tiny bit of lily of the valley which had once been in *his* coat.

She turned a sharp corner of the dusty road when Ballywen lay before her, and in another few minutes she was walking down the village street. As she passed the police barracks she noticed a little stir round the doorway and a stranger evidently a chauffeur, in earnest conversation with two policemen. A little further down the street was the one inn of the village, commonly known as "Halligan's," and outside this quite an excited knot of villagers had gathered to gaze with delight and interest on a beautiful Napier car, now lying badly disabled on the road.

Mary Standish was at once surrounded by an eager group anxious to tell her the news—how the big motor car had run into Patsy Mac's market cart coming down the big hill above, and smashed it "all to smithereens," and how it was badly damaged itself and couldn't make Limerick that night, and how the quality that were in it were in an awful way altogether, the gentleman swearing and the lady near crying because they had to stop at Halligan's till morning.

At this point Mrs. Halligan herself appeared at the inn door, and, seeing Mary, bore down upon her with ejaculations of relief.

"Oh! nurse darlin', won't ye come in for the love of God and speak to the lady in the parlour beyant? She is carrying on something frightful because of the delay that's on her by way of the car breaking down on them! And the gentleman is calling out for dinner, and it just seven o'clock—*dinner*—no less, and it near supper-time! and nothing in the house for the likes of them except I kill the two pullets that would be laying next month! God knows it's heart scalded I am!"

Thus volubly discoursing Mrs. Halligan swept Mary into the inn parlour and left her.

The two occupants of the musty little room turned and looked at her as she stood half hesitating in the doorway. They saw a tall, slight girl, with soft dusky hair which was almost black in colour, and a pair of Irish grey eyes which looked questioningly at them. She wore the cycling uniform and sailor hat of the country nurse.

On her part Mary saw a fairy-like little woman, exquisitely gowned, and a tall, military-looking young fellow, with a determined chin and restless brown eyes.

The lady was seated in the one armchair which the room could boast, and the man was leaning against the mantelpiece. Both looked thoroughly miserable and worried—far more so, Mary thought, than was necessary under the circumstances.

"I must introduce myself," she said pleasantly, "I am Mary Standish, the district nurse here, and Mrs. Halligan asked me to see if I could be of any service to you. It is so uncomfortable to be stranded in a strange place, isn't it?"

The lady addressed smiled charmingly as she rose and offered Mary her hand.

"This is very kind of you, Miss Standish," she said. "I must introduce myself also—I am Lady Muriel Chandler and this is my cousin, Captain Vere. We have had a most unlucky accident with our car—we wanted most particularly to get to Limerick to-night, and now," with a sudden break in the pretty accents, "here we are stranded in this outlandish village."

"And such a rotten hole as it is," interposed her cousin as he tried to kick a hole in Mrs. Halligan's best and most vivid hearthrug—"not even a decent bit to eat! Why the landlady brought us in tea here, and my cousin simply could not touch it."

"She will have a dinner of sorts for you after a while," said Mary smiling—she knew what Mrs. Halligan's culinary achievements were like—"and in the meantime I wonder would you," turning to the lady, "care to come to my cottage—it is quite near, and I think you would be more comfortable. Also I might be able to manage some drinkable tea."

"Oh! you are an angel!" cried Lady Muriel, jumping up eagerly. "Piggy, you can amuse yourself knocking around outside and call for me later. Miss Standish and I want a chat together."

"Anyone will show you my cottage," added Mary smilingly as she and Lady Muriel went out together, leaving "Piggy," otherwise Captain the Hon. Percy Vere, still kicking his heels together in the inn parlour.

Twenty minutes later Lady Muriel was exclaiming with delight as she reclined in one of Mary's basket chairs and gazed round the pretty little room, so homelike and cool after

the stuffy inn. She was sipping China tea from thin Beleek and was herself again.

And yet hardly. Mary still noticed the worried, furtive look, the uneasy manner, and after a while she ventured to remark on it.

"Forgive my asking you," she said, "but was it a matter of great importance that you should be in Limerick to-night? You seem so very worried over it."

The little lady—such a butterfly she seemed to Mary—changed colour slightly and tried to laugh, but it was only a vain attempt.

"Oh! well, it can't be helped, of course," she said, "but it—well! it meant a lot to me!"

And Mary said no more, but she wondered in her own mind. Her guest's pretty fingers were covered with flashing rings, but on the wedding finger, Mary noticed the "plain gold band." Where was her husband? Was he in Limerick awaiting her? But in that case she would have surely mentioned it and wired to him. Why was she motoring alone with this Captain Vere to whom Mary had taken an instinctive dislike?

Presently Lady Muriel, whose bright eyes had been roving around, asked suddenly, "Are you a Catholic, Miss Standish?" and as Mary answered her, she paled slightly, and said—almost involuntarily as it seemed—"So was I—once!"

"Once?" repeated Mary, adding quickly as the old zeal of the convert flamed up for a moment, "And now? Lady Muriel, have you—forgive me—but have you lost the faith quite?"

Her visitor moved restlessly amongst her cushions.

"Well! I—don't—know," she said slowly, "sometimes I think the faith is still there—that I have it still in spite of all. But I am not a practical Catholic. I have not been one for some time. I don't mean that I am outside the Church altogether," with a slight smile. "It is not a year but very nearly that length of time since I went to Confession—and now—of course"—she paused suddenly and did not finish her sentence.

"Why do you speak so?" asked Mary. "What reason is there that now especially you should forsake the faith? Forgive me, please!" she added quickly. "I know I am taking a liberty in speaking so to you, a stranger, but I can see you are in trouble, and I—oh! I have known trouble myself, and so—let me help you if I can!"

Lady Muriel's blue eyes filled with tears.

"Miss Standish!" she said, "you couldn't understand, for you are good—you don't know what sin or temptation is like. And—you don't know what torments a woman suffers when she loves a man!"

"Do I not?" and a queer little smile hovered round Mary's mobile lips, to leave them set in firmer lines than usual.

Lady Muriel glanced up at her quickly.

"You, too!" she cried, "even you, here in this out-of-the-world spot—you have had your story? Even you have trodden the winepress?"

"Yes," said Mary quietly, "I have trodden the winepress."

"Tell me!" cried the other eagerly, "tell me your story, for I am distracted, and don't know what to do! Help me if you can, help me to resist this temptation, to fight it—for otherwise I will go under, I have no one else to help me! God must have sent you to me! Do tell me your sorrow—it may help me to bear mine!"

Mary Standish shrank from speaking of her own story. She had never done so—could she bear to do so now? And what good would it do? Yet she seemed impelled almost against her will to confide in this woman, who had come so suddenly into her life and who appeared to be fighting some great trouble. Was it sorrow or temptation? Mary wondered over it all as she drew her chair close to her guest.

"Won't you tell me your story first?" she asked softly, "and then if I can help you in any way by speaking of my own trouble, I will do so gladly."

Then bit by bit the little tragedy was laid bare before Mary's eyes—those clear, grey eyes which had wept so bitterly in the past that she had thought she had no more tears to weep. But she wept again now, realising as only another woman could, what her sister-woman was suffering. Two women and two such perfect contrasts! The butterfly and the worker—and yet sitting together, hand in hand, in that perfect sympathy, that one touch which "makes the whole world kin." Lady Muriel Chandler was the youngest daughter of an impoverished nobleman, and when only eighteen, she had, as a matter of course, contracted a "marriage of convenience" with a wealthy commoner. Thomas Chandler was a pompous, purse-proud man of middle age—stout, florid, slightly bald—the very opposite, needless to say, to all a young girl's ideals. It was the old story. He was a self-made man and wanted a charming young wife of aristocratic lineage to sit at the head of his table and to do the honours of his blatantly new residence, and her parents wanted money and wanted it badly.

For a few years all had gone well, or moderately so. Reared in the traditions of her class, Lady Muriel simply regarded her husband as a necessary evil, while he, on his part, was quite satisfied with his bargain. His wife was beautiful, and one of the most popular and well-dressed women in Society. What more could he want?

And then the inevitable happened.

Captain Percy Vere, well-bred, handsome, and distinguished-looking, and possessed of that irresistible "way with women" which is such a dangerous attribute in some men, came home from India with his regiment. He was a distant connection of Lady Muriel's people, and at once put himself on terms of comradeship with his lovely little "cousin" as

he always called her. He had not seen her for some years and hardly recognised in this self-possessed little woman of the world, the wild "tomboy" who used to ride her pony barebacked and challenge him to a race, when he spent his holidays at her father's tumble-down old castle in Mayo. While, on her part, she thought she had found her ideal man at last, and blinded by her feelings she could not see his many and obvious defects, but woman-like endued him with all the good qualities which he did not possess. It started as a friendship and of course they called it "platonic," and equally of course it ended as most "platonic" friendships do. And so that morning they had left Mr. Chandler at a friend's house about thirty miles away, announcing that they were motoring to Limerick to have a look at the old city and would be back to Rathreale again in the evening. As a matter of fact they meant to take the boat train from Limerick to Queenstown *en route* for America. The breaking down of the motor car had upset all their plans, as there was no train to Limerick from Ballywen that night, and the delay would give Lady Muriel's husband time to follow her, which he certainly would do. Not that he suspected anything, but he would fear an accident of some kind, and would most likely come this road early to-morrow as it was the most direct.

As Lady Muriel said, "You see we were only to motor to Limerick to see a friend and go round the city, and were to be back at Rathreale again this evening. So now if we don't turn up Mr. Chandler will be wondering what has happened, and will most probably come after us. What shall I do, what shall I do—I am so unhappy!"

"There is only one thing to do—you know that, Lady Muriel," cried Mary. "You must go back to your husband."

"But I love Percy so, how can I leave him?"

"He is not worthy of your love," cried Muriel hotly, "and I believe no man is worthy of a woman's love—no, not even the best of them! Listen to me for a while!" And rapidly, passionately, she went over her own story, living again the scenes of a year ago, while she held Lady Muriel's little soft hand in her own firm one, patting it every now and then in sympathy.

"And so you see," she ended, "when *he* could do such a thing—a good man and such a strong Catholic—when *he* could act so, what can you expect from a man of the world like Captain Vere? Lady Muriel give him up before it is too late—don't ruin your life for him! Indeed he is not worth it!"

Lady Muriel's sobs had ceased while Mary had been speaking, and she lay back quietly in her chair and looked curiously at the other's earnest face.

"Have you quite forgiven the one who injured you?" she asked suddenly.

Mary frowned slightly and a look of pain crossed her face.

"I wish him no harm," she said briefly.

"But of course *you* have the comfort of religion," continued Lady Muriel, "you have never abandoned its consolations, and naturally it has helped you to bear your trouble with resignation. You would say 'Welcome be the Will of God' as I remember my dear old nurse so often did. Is that not so?"

There was no answer and she glanced at Mary in some surprise.

"Surely," she questioned, "for you that receive the Sacraments frequently and keep so close to Our Lord, surely it is easier for you to bear the loss of a mere earthly love, than for me who have turned my back on religion wilfully and for so long?"

Still silence from Mary Standish, and Lady Muriel felt as if the firm hands which had been holding her own so firmly had become suddenly cold.

"My dear," she cried wistfully, "speak to me! Tell me that you receive hope and comfort from your faith, that the Holy Communion brings peace to your heart. How can I return to the right path as I want to do—I *do* want to—so much—if there is no comfort or consolation waiting for me?"

And Mary Standish sat as one stricken dumb, while her conscience showed her the hardness of heart, the stony indifference, with which she had, as it were, enveloped herself during the past year. It had seemed to her that because she did not lose her faith altogether, but still clung to its outward forms and ceremonies, and to all appearance still remained a good Catholic, that was all and more than God would possibly expect from her after all she had suffered. And all the while the dear Sacred Heart was longing for her, the Prince of Love was waiting for her, and she—she had put far from her the One who never fails, He who is "the one unfailing Friend."

And it had been left to a woman of the world, a mere butterfly, one who had openly confessed her sin and long indifference, it was left to such a one to open her eyes at last.

The hot tears rained down Mary's face as she bowed her head and cried, "God forgive me! God forgive me! for I am not worthy of the faith that was given to me!"

Father Fahy's housekeeper looked rather curiously at the beautifully dressed little lady who walked so daintily up the garden path and knocked at the door. But the old woman's eyes brightened and a smile of welcome appeared on her weather-beaten face as Mary Standish was seen to be with the stranger.

"Yes, surely his reverence was at home, and would see them. Would they just step in and she would tell him?"

And before he retired to rest that night, the gentle old priest—one of those men of God that we so often find living their simple lives obscurely in some quiet spot—knelt down to thank his Master that he had been permitted to speak the

words that brought "the peace that passeth understanding" to two souls that night.

The next morning Mrs. Halligan was scattering corn to her noisy lot of fowls and holding animated converse with several neighbours who "chanced to be passing" and stopped of course to bid her the time of day.

"No, I didn't have to kill the two pullets after all, thanks be to God! for the lady stayed at the nurse's cottage all night, and the gentleman was that cross and contrary—whatever came over him—that he didn't care a hair what he ate, and I wasn't goin' to be wasting good food on the likes of him! Yes, the lady is a little beauty sure enough, and must be a real good Catholic, too, for she was at Holy Communion this morning along with the nurse. I believe it's what she is expecting her husband over from Rathreale with another motor car to take them back there, for Mrs. Mac at the post office is after telling me that a wire went away to him early this morning telling him about the smash up and all to that. No, the Captain's not going back with them, he drove to the station early this morning to get the Limerick train, it seems he has friends there he has to go see. Yes, indeed, Mrs. Heaney, its the grand mornin' it is, thanks be to God!"

And Mary Standish leaning on her garden gate a little later in the day and watching a motor rapidly disappearing down the dusty road, smiled through her tears, and Browning's beautiful lines suddenly broke upon her with all their true meaning,

God is in His Heaven,
—All's right with the world.

ANNIE M. P. SMITHSON.



The Highway of the Cross.

III. THE HOUSE OF ANNAS.

ANNAS-BEN-SETH, called Ananos by Josephus the Jewish historian, was at the period of our Lord the most prominent figure in the national and religious life of Judea. His father Seth had been the head of one of the most powerful priestly families, and is spoken of by Josephus as the most fortunate man of his time. Like most sacerdotal families theirs belonged to the political-religious party known as Sadducees, *i.e.*, those who through the intercourse of Palestine with the Greek kingdoms of Syria and Egypt and with Rome had adopted many of the ways and ideas of pagan civilization, to the detriment of the national religion and traditions of which they should have been the guardians. But if the flame of faith burned low that of ambition burned strong, and their hold on power was strong. Annas at the age of thirty-seven and about the year A.D. six or seven had been freely and regularly elected to the office of high-priest; and this with the approval of the pro-consul of Syria, now a Roman province, who had come to Jerusalem to arrange for the incorporation of the territories of the deposed tetrarch Archelaus with his pro-consulate. The influence of the high-priest was at this time much increased by his being made by Rome, since there was no prince reigning in Jerusalem, also president of the Sanhedrim, the tribunal supreme in all matters civil and religious. In character Annas was clever, bold, energetic, and he was well versed in the law, but he was cunning, suspicious, unscrupulous, and intensely avaricious. He had managed to retain this high and this influential office for seven years, when he was deposed, for some cause unknown, by the Roman procurator, Valerius Gratus, the predecessor of Pontius Pilate. Fifteen years afterwards he had succeeded in getting the office conferred on Joseph Caiphas,

his son-in-law, a man much his inferior in learning and strength of character. All these years the people, who deeply resented any infringement on a national institution, considered the several changes in their royal priesthood as illegal, and looked on Annas as their legal pontiff. He thus maintained his prestige in their eyes, and held an unchallenged ascendancy over the Sanhedrim, and in the general policy of the chief priests. Hence St. Luke thus couples the two names; "under the high priests Annas and Caiphas," Annas it should be noted, being placed first.

The position of Annas' residence was for a long time a matter of dispute, but it seems established that he was at this time dwelling in a wing of the palace of the high priests. The city wall indeed now runs between the traditional sites, marked by Armenian convents, of the houses of Annas and Caiphas, but this fact presents no real difficulty, for the two sites are only one hundred and fifty yards apart, and both were anciently inside the wall. This palace of the high priests was situated on the southern slope of Mount Sion, a little above the Cenacle, and looking on the west across the broad spaces in front of the magnificent palace which Herod the Great had built for himself and his dynasty. It was of considerable extent, covering with its various buildings, courts and gardens an area of about two acres and a half. As all important residences, it consisted of one, perhaps several, flagged courts surrounded by buildings of stone or burnt-brick and having an upper storey, whose stone steps for approach and windows gave into the court. It was entered from the road by an archway closed by a massive gate, at whose side was a wicket to admit single persons.

In some reception hall of his residence Annas was waiting. It would be a long room, its walls hung with tapestry of bright colours, its roof of cedar, or other precious wood. The floor paved but at one end slightly raised and of boards on which would be spread rich carpets and couches for guests; a moveable brazier of glowing charcoal gave warmth, and sconces of wrought metal held the lamps of olive oil that gave a clear yet soft light. He would wear no official robes, but be carefully garbed according to his station; his simla, or mantle, of warm and richly coloured cloth over his tunics of finest linen or wool, his broad girdle and the fastening of his sandals embroidered or jewelled, his turban of silk or muslin. His thin white hair, and long white beard framed a face intelligent and alert, worn and furrowed by thought and care. He was not alone. Summons to the council had been issued in good time to his friends, and some had come in to see him on their way to the council chamber.

But he is now wearied of talking, and sits silent, many thoughts coursing through his brain. "How long they are a-coming; how late it is, past midnight! Can Judas of Kerioth have played them false? Has the prophet from Galilee fled, or succeeded in concealing himself in the recesses of that garden at Gethsemane? Has the captain of the guard

been so foolish as to lead his prisoner along the direct road through Ophel the quarter of mechanics and labourers and now crowded with Galileans, and has a rescue been attempted, perhaps effected?"

At length a sound as of some movement—a pause as of waiting while the great gate is slowly swung open—the noise of many feet approaching. As door and heavy hangings are thrown back, a slight breeze makes the lamps flicker and the light uncertain. As the light clears again, and the comers have drawn near, Annas realises that what he has long wished for is come at last, he is face to face with Jesus of Nazareth. At once all his fears are dispelled. This broken, captive, helpless man can be no successful conspirator or leader of revolt, his vaunted kingdom and power are but visionary. No need for fear, rather he deserves pity. Some gentleness comes to Annas' face slowly as trying to feel its way over the hard lines, some condescension to his voice. But discontent is rife in the country; men are banding together, some openly as the Essenes and the Zealots, some secretly in hope of regaining national freedom. Any more revolts, and Rome may take away their "name and nation" altogether. Therefore it were wise to ascertain at least two things before the council met, who were this man's followers and where were they, and what had been his teaching.

Our Lord stands silent amid the guards and servants and in the uncertain light of some lanterns and torches they hold; silent still through the long pauses Annas makes from time to time, inviting and waiting for reply. He wears yet the customary white linen head-dress bound round the brow to back of neck but limp now with the dew of night and with His sweat and blood. His pallid face bears the traces of the agony more bitter than death through which He had passed at Gethsemane. The cords are loosed from His neck and waist, and His unbound hands hang at the side of His damp and mud-stained garments. But Annas notes the calmness and nobility of bearing, the light of sweetness on the sad face. At length the answer comes, amazing Annas and his friends as it sweeps aside his insidious questions and confronts him with clear and unquestionable assertion. He had taught openly; and to the world, in city and village, by the roadway and the lakeside, in the synagogues and wherever the Jews resort, at Festival times in the portico of the Temple: He had not taught in secret. Why should they ask Him? they should ask those who had listened to Him; surely these knew what He had been teaching. There is again silence. Annas at once sees his mistake; it mortifies and annoys him. His questioning is illegal in time and place and in its endeavour to elicit a confession. As no one knows what to do or say, the silence grows long and embarrassing and to Annas humiliating. Then a blow is heard, not from a stave or fist, but a sharp slap from an open hand. Some assert that it was given by Malchus, others that it drew blood, others that our Lord fell upon the steps of the raised

floor. These things we know not; but it was a blow given with the flat of the hand across the face, an ignominy as well as a pain. To the insolent words that accompany the blow our Lord deigns reply: if He had spoken evil to the multitudes let testimony be given, but if well why this violence? Annas neither reprimands the servant, nor notices the outrage. Again there is an awkward silence, and Annas gives sign that our Lord be bound again and conducted from his presence.

And now he is alone, for the other members of the council have betaken themselves at once to the residence of Caiphas. The interview with Jesus of Nazareth which he had himself arranged, to which he had looked forward so keenly and from which he had expected so much is over; and for him it has ended in failure and discomfiture. His friends, the guards, the servants, all in the room had witnessed his defeat, and loss of dignity. Under heavy sense of mortification his heart sinks deeper and deeper, and old age seems to lay its hand more heavily upon him. But the strong spirit holds to purpose and has the power of rebound. A little while and he is at the side of Caiphas; the light, the warmth, the sense of numbers and strength rouse all his energies—here are priests, eminent doctors in the law, heads of the most illustrious families of the land. They are the supreme council of Israel, they are his friends and he can mould them to his will. 'Tis true they have no longer the power of the sword, of life and death. Rome keeps that, but, if carefully managed, Rome will acquiesce and carry out their sentence. Another Galilean Judas of Gamalad, had headed a rising some years ago. He had seen that stamped out in blood even in the Temple, he would see this also perish and, if needs be, in blood.

PLACID WAREING.



THE MADONNA DELLA TENDA.

[Raphael.]

Mary, to thee the heart was given
For infant hand to hold,
And clasp thus, an eternal heaven,
The great earth in its fold.

He seized the world with tender might
By making thee His own;
Thee, lowly queen, whose heavenly height
Was to thyself unknown.

In Memoriam.

A. W. PUGIN.

(Written in June, 1914).

The loud world scorns and scoffing turns away,
And fashion's fickle jury hath revers'd
Their verdict given yesterwhile and curs'd
The works their fathers honour'd in their day.
Now self-enslaved once more to pagan sway,
And deeming Fortune's wheel no more will turn,
They boast their triumph final, nor discern
Religion casting the world's mould away
Beneath the approving eye of him who thrones
Upon the chair of Peter, and renews
All things in Christ, unlocks the ancient tomes
Of Christian art and pagan forms eschews.
So may I, braving their loud ribaldry,
Revere and bless thy hallow'd memory.

H. E. G. ROPE.

Art and Duty.

Be still, my heart, be still. Tho' voices calling
May pierce thee to the quick, my heart, be still.
"Haste, haste," they cry, "soon will the leaves be falling,
The books unread, the lands unreachable,
The songs unwritten, that, like sparkles leaping
A moment from the dimness of dark days,
Shot light athwart the prison wherein sleeping
Art waits the password loyalty gainsays."
Be still, my heart, be still. Thy Master knoweth,
He careth and He smileth at thy fears.
In destin'd hour the buried seed upgroweth,
Or here on earth or in the eternal years.

H. E. G. ROPE.

The Owner of Gorreston Hall.

"Transit gloria mundi, fides Catholica manet."

By FELICIA CURTIS.

Author of "Under the Rose," "In the Lean Years,"
"Near Neighbours," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VII.

There was a confusion of greetings; then Jemima found herself, with Leo beside her, speeding through a broad, tree-shaded road in a big motor-car.

"How is father, and how do you come to be asked to Gorreston, and why in the name of common-sense have you got that Bretton man with you?" inquired Jemima, as soon as they were fairly started, having waited to let the cars containing the rest of the party get well ahead, for reasons concerning dust.

"Father is—he says better, but—well, it is to be hoped that Trevyck air will do him good. The 'Bretton man' has been staying a couple of days with us; you know the pater likes him."

"I cannot imagine why?" with lofty scorn.

Leo laughed.

"Haven't you forgiven him for shaking you, yet?"

"He didn't shake me," indignantly. "I should like to see him daring to attempt it!"

"You are not likely to have that pleasure while you have a faithful brother to defend you, *et cetera*; but you know, Jemima, you said he shook you?"

"I didn't. I believe I said that he 'all but shook me'; that is quite a different thing. Do you know that he is engaged to Clare Newton? You didn't? Fancy his keeping it to himself."

"Men don't talk about things of that kind."

"Don't put on airs of masculine superiority, Leo. I believe they talk about 'things of that kind' quite as much as girls do."

"Oh-h-h! What a beautiful old place!"

In the distance, at a fair height above the surrounding country, stood a huge pile of buildings; broad terraces connected by flights of steps led down from it.

"Have you ever been here before, Leo?"

"No. It is a grand old place! It was shut up—caretakers looked after it, till Gorreston came of age. The granny finds it dull to live in for any length of time, I believe; at any rate she never has lived here, since grandfather's death, I mean."

And the car swerved into the drive; a broad avenue, lined with elms.

"You have not answered my question about how you came to be asked to Gorreston," said Jemima, as they drew nearer the great entrance door where John Gorreston stood waiting to receive them.

"Oh, Gorreston motored over to call on us, and invited Bretton and myself; I didn't half like leaving the pater, but he would not hear of my refusing."

"What do you think of this, Clare?" Teresa Newton came into the room where her sister stood looking into the fire with an absorbed expression.

"Of what?" she asked, rousing herself, and looking round at the speaker's discontented face.

"Don't you know? Which room do you suppose has been allotted to that girl? The Elizabeth Chamber, if you please!"

"I wonder at John. Why didn't he give it to the granny?"

"Oh, it seems the granny will never use any but the suite in the modern part; the rooms she had when she came here as a bride. The idea of giving the Elizabeth Chamber to a girl like Jemima!"

"He probably did so because she is all but a total stranger," suggested Clare; "our rooms are comfortable enough, though I like the modern side of the house best. All the oak panelling in this part makes the place gloomy."

"I really think John might have shown me a little more marked attention in the choice of rooms," said Teresa querulously. "He should have consulted my wishes, after all the way in which he has behaved."

"You know my opinion about John," returned her sister. "I have always told you that his attentions are merely cousinly; he means nothing by them."

Teresa flushed angrily. She was one of those unfortunately-constituted young women who see in every masculine attention paid to them—no matter how slight, or how perfunctory that attention may be—an impending declaration of undying attachment.

"It is very unkind of you to say that, Clare," she said pettishly, "after all the things I have told you that John has said, and the way he looked when he said them. Only this morning he told me that he liked my hat immensely."

"Did you ask him whether he liked it? But of course you did." There was a little contempt in Clare's tone. "You are just wasting your time on John Gorreston, Teresa."

"That is all very well for you," whimpered Teresa, dabbing her eyes with her handkerchief, "you are safely engaged, with your ring, and everything; though such a long engagement would worry me dreadfully—I should always be afraid the man would die, or something."

Clare made no reply. Teresa looked at her sister's brooding face suspiciously.

"Why did not Peter Bretton come to see us before going to the Trevycks?" she asked.

"How do I know?" asked Clare coldly.

"He was in no very great hurry to see you, evidently, if he could go and stay at Trevyck. I don't believe you knew he was in England, even?"

"You are quite right, I did not. We have got over the stage of perpetual letter-writing to each other long ago. Don't be spiteful, Teresa, because I gave you my opinion about John's non-intentions. It does no good, and it is decidedly ill-bred."

In happy ignorance of her cousins' sentiments, Jemima found her new quarters delightful. The Elizabeth Chamber derived its name from a huge portrait of Anne Boleyn's tyrannical daughter that hung over the carved mantelpiece. Fires were kept up all the year round in the huge mansion; the glow of the burning logs was reflected in the polished doors of tall oaken presses, and carved wainscoting. This part of the house was not insulted by modern innovations of gas or electric lighting; great silver sconces full of wax candles were on the walls, and bowls of hothouse roses stood about the room. Rosalie had exhausted all the terms of admiration her musical language affords upon seeing the quarters assigned to her mistress.

Now and then, during the evening, Jemima found herself wondering what could possibly have attracted Peter Bretton to Clare Newton. Jemima had never been thrown into the society of an engaged couple before; she regarded the present pair with some little curiosity, observing that their conduct was not in the least like the species of behaviour described as characteristic of persons betrothed to each other, by the writers of the serials in the *Daily Cackler*; or even by the authors of those six-shilling volumes through which she had so painfully waded.

Miss Trevyck came to the conclusion that those descriptions were flights of fancy on the part of the describers; and that lovers were in reality exactly like other people.

The engaged couple strolled together on the terraces; they chatted amicably together, in perfectly audible tones; there was no interchange of glances suggestive of a mutual understanding. Bretton was no more demonstrative towards the lady whom he desired to marry than he was to herself or Teresa: he devoted himself very much to Lady Gorreston, with whom he fell in love at first sight—as did most young men—and after much persuasion obtained the old lady's permission to paint her portrait.

The hawthorns deserved the fame they had acquired; Jemima revelled in the beauty of the English spring. Life seemed to have become just a succession of pleasant experiences. The girl, sweet-natured and unselfish, had a touch of the philosopher in her character; she took the little annoyances that are inseparable from daily life with serenity; but those annoyances were microscopically small at Gorreston where some delightful plan was formed for her pleasure with each returning day.

"I have an idea that you are enjoying yourself very completely, Miss Trevyck?" remarked Bretton, meeting the girl coming with her arms full of wild-rose sprays, gathered in the Gorreston woods. She smiled upon him happily; it was impossible to be glum with anybody—however much you might dislike the individual—so she said to herself, on such a spring day.

"Yes, I am enjoying myself absolutely. I had no idea that my own country was so beautiful," she replied.

"This is an exceptionally beautiful part of it," replied Bretton; "but there is beauty—of different kinds and degrees—to be found in most places."

"Even in the Black Country," remarked John Gorreston, coming up in time to hear this observation, "eh, Bretton?"

"Yes, even in the Black Country," returned Bretton shortly, and changed the subject a little abruptly.

"Does Mr. Bretton live in the Black Country?" asked Jemima, encountering John later in the day.

"No," said her cousin with a smile; "but he has a little place there, and is a power in the land. Does all sorts of things for the colliery people; clubs and entertainments, and what not. He doesn't like his doings mentioned, however. Bretton is a very modest fellow; hates seeming to make a show of good works, and that sort of thing."

"I should never have suspected him of being a man of that kind—taking an interest in poor people, and so on, I mean." Jemima felt—for no obvious reason—a little conscience-stricken.

"He generally puts the worst side of himself prominently to the front. It's not very bad, though, even the worst side. He's a thoroughly good fellow."

Jemima sighed a little impatiently.

"Come for a walk down to the village," suggested her cousin; "I am going there. What has become of the granny and the rest?"

"They have driven somewhere to make a call on some of grandmama's old friends."

"And you?"

"I did not want to go; besides two girls are really quite enough."

"We will go through the gardens, the walk is prettier," said John; and they strolled along chatting easily on the first subject that came uppermost in the mind of either, Jemima being perfectly at her ease in the happy conviction that her cousin was not in the very least likely to—as she inwardly phrased it—make himself ridiculous about her.

As they neared a range of greenhouses at some distance from the house, one of the gardeners appeared bearing a great sheaf of Madonna lilies.

"How lovely!" Jemima stopped to admire the snowy blossoms.

"Ah, I am glad you like lilies. I am particularly fond of

them; and Hayes"—with a smile and nod towards the gardener—"makes a speciality of them, I fancy. Are those for the church?"

"Yes, sir. Father George said he had your permission to ask for a few."

"Quite right. I'm glad you are giving him a good supply."

"Is that the church?" asked Jemima. They were descending a steepish hill; at the bottom of it, at the entrance to the village, rose an ivy-covered tower.

"That is the parish church, to which you will, I suppose, be taken with the rest of us to-morrow," replied John; "but it is not the church to which the lilies are going, if that is what you meant."

"Why not?"

"My dear cousin Jemima! If the Reverend James Moberley, the special shepherd of the souls of the Gorreston population—that is, of as many of them as will allow themselves to be shepherded by him—were asked to allow flowers to be put upon his communion-table, he would regard the asker as given over to—well—to the unpleasant Enemy, whom it is not polite to mention."

"But—why? What possible harm could there be in putting flowers in any place?"

"None—from your point of view, and mine—but the Reverend James would consider such a proceeding what he styles 'putting in the thin end of the wedge.'"

Jemima looked at the speaker in perplexity.

"Why," went on Gorreston, "he is one of the very few parsons left who preach in a black gown and bands!"

The statement conveyed no meaning to his hearer.

"What on earth does it matter to anybody what the man wears?" asked the girl impatiently.

"Nothing—to me at any rate; but he thinks it matters."

They had reached the gate, and paused to look at the church, a fine building of considerable antiquity. Round the porch was carved a border of the alternate heads of foxes and owls; a niche that had once held a statue, the broken pedestal whereof still remained, was above it.

"Do you care to go inside—I can get the keys if you do?" inquired John.

"The keys? Do English people lock up their churches?"

"Mostly. Not all of them, though."

"No, do not trouble about the keys, cousin John. I shall see the inside to-morrow. If it is at all like the church granny goes to in London, I am quite ready to wait until I am forced to see it."

John laughed, and they strolled on towards the village; Hayes passed them, walking quickly, and carrying the sheaf of lilies.

Their progress through the little hamlet was a slow one.

"Sir John" appeared to know every man, woman, child and

dog in the place, so thought his cousin; and to be popular alike with all. Kindly, if curious, eyes rested on the girl; the general opinion being that Gorreston's owner "might do worse" than transform Miss Trevyck into Lady Gorreston. Fortunately for Jemima's peace of mind she was absolutely unconscious of the cause of the extreme attention shown to her.

At the further extremity of the village street was a small building of rough grey stone.

"That is where the lilies have gone," said John, indicating the little place; "it is the Roman Catholic chapel. The priest and I are very good friends. Would you like to see the interior?"

They went in. It was a poor little place, architecturally considered; but the altar was beautiful, as were also the statues of Our Lady and the Sacred Heart on either side of it. There was a curious hush and peacefulness about the place, thought Jemima standing before the altar rail. She felt no inclination to speak, and, when John Gorreston made low-voiced remarks about the exquisite design of the altar, replied only by a little affirmative gesture.

"Why is there something in a Catholic church—no matter how small or shabby it may be—that makes it seem different from other places?" asked the girl, when they were out in the road again.

"Bretton would tell you that it is the Real Presence," was the reply.

"Bretton? Is Mr. Bretton a Catholic?"

"Yes."

"Like my cousins?"

"Emphatically no! Bretton would tell you that there is only one kind—his kind—of Catholic."

"And you—what do you think, cousin John?"

"I am of the same opinion," returned Gorreston, with a little laugh. "Anglicanism is just an imitation of the real thing; a body with the soul left out."

"But—you are a Protestant, are you not?"

"I? Yes, I suppose I am, though I do no protesting."

"It is awfully puzzling!" Jemima's brows met in a perplexed frown. "What did you mean by the Real Presence, cousin John?"

John felt uncomfortable, as the average Englishman usually does when called to speak upon matters affecting eternal verities.

"Don't you know, Jemima?" he asked awkwardly.

"No, I don't." The frank, dark eyes, clear and innocent as those of a child, met his with absolute sincerity.

"It means that Our Lord is actually and truly present." John Gorreston had bared his head while uttering that sentence. Jemima noted the gesture.

"You mean Jesus Christ?" she asked wonderingly; "how can that be?"

"That I cannot tell you, little cousin; but—it is."

"You believe it, too, cousin John?"

The young man—to use his own inward expression—was driven into a corner by the girl's directness. He looked at her for an instant before replying, then said soberly:

"Keep the fact to yourself, Jemima, when I acknowledge that I do. I wouldn't if I could help it, I'll acknowledge, but—well—I do, that's all about it!"

"Of course I won't speak of it to anyone, why should I? But why is it a secret, cousin John?"

"My dear cousin! Don't you think you have asked me as many questions as one poor intellect can stand?"

Jemima flushed a little.

"I beg your pardon. It is the fault of my having been brought up without girl friends to teach me how to behave, I suppose. I know it is abominably rude to ask so many questions. Please forgive me."

"There is nothing whatever to forgive." John immediately felt a brute. "Just ask me as many questions as you like, only remember that I am not clever enough to be able to answer all of them."

But Jemima decided that—for the present, at any rate—she would not avail herself of that permission.

"What did you do with yourself all the afternoon?" asked Clare, coming with Teresa into the Elizabeth Chamber on their return from their drive. "You were lucky in being able to escape that visit. It was appallingly dull."

"All women, except three or four old fossils who remembered grandpapa, and could talk of nothing else," added Teresa disgustedly. "But what did you do, Jemima?"

"I went for a walk with cousin John," replied Jemima innocently.

Teresa became speechless.

"Where did you go?" inquired Clare, with elaborate carelessness.

"Through the village."

"I hope you enjoyed it," with a slight touch of sarcasm, lost upon the hearer; "Gorreston village—I believe it occasionally calls itself a town—is not particularly interesting."

"Oh, I think it rather a pretty place on the whole. Yes, thank you, Clare, I did enjoy it very much."

"So," exclaimed Clare to her sister as soon as they were alone together, "that was John's 'very particular business with his steward' was it? He couldn't go with us, but could waste an afternoon with that gawky girl!"

"So deep of her, too! It must have been a planned affair!" returned Teresa spitefully.

"Just like a man to run after a fresh face; but as I am always warning you, Teresa, John has no serious intentions."

CHAPTER VIII.

The time went swiftly at Gorreston, too swiftly for Jemima's wishes; the girl liked the free country life much better than she did life in a great city. Leo, after spending four or five days at the Hall, had returned to Trevyck; his father became uneasy and restless if he had not his son within reach.

That son had been voted extremely uninteresting by the Newton cousins. Leo showed a decided preference for his sister's society, his own private opinion being that neither Clare nor Teresa "was a patch on Jemima." All the time he could spare from dancing attendance on the granny—who adored him for his handsome face and gay light-heartedness—he bestowed on her. The sisters ascribed his attentions to the old lady as being prompted by interested motives; and his merry good-humour to foreign frivolity.

Dr. Sclater's visit had been deferred; but he appeared at last, when Jemima was beginning to count the remaining days of her stay, and lament the departure of each one of them. The girl had been too much accustomed to masculine society to care for the companionship of the Clare and Teresa type of young woman. With the unsparing criticism of her youthful inexperience she pronounced their conversation "twaddle," which it was, and regarded their ideals—as far as she could discover any—beneath contempt.

Peter Bretton had remained at Gorreston after Leo's departure, occupying himself with the granny's picture, intended for a present to John. Jemima regarded the artist with a good deal more interest since that conversation with John Gorreston.

"It is such a puzzle to me, grandmama," she remarked, as she walked beside the old lady up and down the terrace one morning; "what could have attracted my cousin Clare towards Mr. Bretton?"

"He is a fine-looking man; and a particularly cultured and well-born one, child. A good many young women would be quite ready to accept him, in spite of the drawback of his religion."

That religious question again! Jemima was resolved not to let that subject intrude upon the conversation.

"Father likes him immensely" she said vaguely. The old lady cast a keen glance at her.

"What was Dr. Sclater talking to you about for so long last night, Jemima?"

"Oh, all sorts of things, grandmama. I wanted to know a heap of things about those mummies he showed me in the Museum."

"Was that all?"

"No, he was describing his house in Edinburgh to me. It must be an interesting old place. Bonnie Prince Charlie dined there; his picture hangs in the dining-room."

Jemima wondered a little at the interest taken in the subject-matter of the doctor's conversation.

"He is over forty," said Lady Gorreston, with apparent irrelevance.

"I suppose he is," replied her granddaughter indifferently.

They walked up and down two or three times in silence; then Lady Gorreston said suddenly:

"You were wondering about Clare's engagement, child. Well, I happen to know the story of it; but, if I tell that story to you, there must be no allusion to it ever made to Clare, or to anyone else, you understand."

"Of course, grandmama."

"Frederick Newton, your uncle, is a great authority on Arabic—I believe that was the language; something out-of-the-way, I know it was. Peter Bretton went to him as a pupil."

"And fell in love with Clare."

"He did nothing of the sort; do not interrupt, Jemima. It was Clare who fell in love with him."

Lady Gorreston paused, but Jemima was wary. She kept silence.

"So, after he had been staying with the Newtons some six months, Clare took to going without her dinner, and having fits of crying for no apparent reason, and at last her mother found out that she had set her affections on Peter Bretton."

Jemima's face was a study in contempt. The old lady glanced at her with some amusement.

"The unfortunate young man had paid the usual attentions young men pay to girls; perhaps rather more of them than he need have paid, through being in the same house; so, when the Rector, your Uncle Newton, asked him his intentions, he felt bound in honour to propose to Clare."

"And she accepted him?"

"She did. Mind, I do not say they were not in love with each other, child; of that I know nothing, but my own opinion is that the idea of marrying Clare had never entered Peter Bretton's head until it was put before him by Clare's father."

Jemima felt an unreasoning pity for the young man rising within her. She denounced the sentiment as absurd.

"General Bretton, Peter's father, was furious when he heard of the engagement. He said some very hard things to Frederick Newton, I believe. He was boiling over with rage when he came to me—when the General came, I mean, my dear; we were very old friends."

There was a far-away look in the keen old eyes for an instant. Lady Gorreston sat down on a seat at the end of the terrace, and motioned the girl to a place beside her.

"Why did Mr. Bretton's father object?" asked Jemima presently a little timidly, but extremely anxious not to miss the ending of the story.

"He had other ambitions for his son. Besides, the young man was but two-and-twenty. That wretched engagement has lasted seven years."

"Teresa said five."

"Of course. They always take off a couple of years; such a lengthy engagement is so detrimental to a girl, and Clare is five-and-twenty."

"Why did not they marry?"

"General Bretton had the entire property—he was immensely rich, and Peter is his only child—the entire property at his own disposal. He would not disinherit his son; but he made a will, leaving everything to him on the condition that he remained unmarried until he had completed his thirtieth year. Of course the foolish young fellow was quite ready to forfeit his inheritance if Clare wished an immediate marriage; in which case Frederick Newton would have had to support them, and any children they might have; for Peter had only a small income, just sufficient for a man of quiet tastes to live upon, and no more. Neither Clare nor her father desired an immediate marriage."

Jemima thought it rather a sordid story, but considered it advisable to keep that sentiment to herself.

"I was very much displeased with Frederick Newton about it," went on the old lady with an air that convinced Jemima that the reverend delinquent must have had rather a bad time. "Of course nothing so ill-bred as a quarrel, child; quarrels between relatives are in shockingly bad taste; but I declined to have the young man brought here. That is why this is the first time that my old friend's son has received an invitation to meet me."

There was a silence. Presently Jemima said wonderingly:

"Why did General Bretton put the marriage off? I don't see what good that was as his son and my cousin were engaged."

"When you are a few years older, Jemima, you will understand that what appears to be the only thing worth living for at one age, may possibly appear not in the very least desirable at another. General Bretton trusted to time, and the changes time brings about."

And just then the artist, with his easel under his arm and a sketching block in his hand appeared at the other end of the terrace. Jemima had a half guilty feeling as she returned his greeting.

"Are you willing to accept a commission, Mr. Bretton?" asked the old lady suddenly. The three were walking towards the house.

"Why, certainly—so long as it is not to paint Gorger."

The subject indicated being a particularly hideous yellow cat, the object of John Gorreston's fond devotion, Gorger being equally devoted to his master.

"No, not Gorger. I should greatly like to have a portrait of my niece Jemima."

"If Miss Trevyck will honour me with sittings." The artist bowed gravely. Lady Gorreston looked at the beautiful mutinous face of the proposed model, and her eyes twinkled maliciously.

"Of course Miss Trevyck will sit for you," she said serenely. "I should like you to be painted in white velvet, Jemima. You will have to accept a present from me of that gown for the occasion."

And Rosalie entering Jemima's dressing-room a quarter of an hour later, stopped aghast at the sight of her young lady shaking her fist savagely at her own reflection in the looking-glass.

"Find me the ugliest gown I possess, Rosalie; I just want to look hideous!" she said to that distracted attendant, who was, however, far too proud of her to give implicit obedience to such a command.

That was a memorable day for Jemima. Dr. Sclater was at his very best at dinner. There were several guests from distant country houses, and Miss Trevyck enjoyed the conversation exceedingly. She was standing by a window looking out at the beauty of the spring night presently, when Dr. Sclater came up to her.

"I had a letter from your father this morning, Miss Trevyck," he said presently.

"Did he say how he was? He has not answered my last letter."

"Mr. Trevyck said that he was better." There was something in the tone that made Jemima glance quickly at the speaker; the kindly brown eyes met hers with an expression in them that the girl did not understand; she felt embarrassed without knowing why.

"Do you think forty a very patriarchal age; I was forty last month?" asked Doctor Sclater suddenly.

"Patriarchal? Oh, no. Of course not. Patriarchs have snow-white beards and bald heads as a rule, haven't they?"

Her companion laughed.

"In that case I certainly am not a patriarch," he said.

"May I tell you what my letter to your father, that brought this morning's reply, was about?"

"Yes, do." Jemima looked at him expectantly.

"I had asked him that very question that I have just asked you. Whether he thought forty a patriarchal age; an age when a man ought to consider himself too old to ask a woman, young and beautiful, to share life with him?"

The truth flashed upon his hearer. She looked at him in dismayed astonishment.

"So, having your father's permission, I ask you whether you will honour and bless me by consenting to become my wife. I have loved you from the first moment that I met you."

"Loved ME?" The astonishment in the tone brought a smile to the lips hidden by the brown beard.

"Is there anything so extraordinary in that?" asked Doctor Sclater gently; "there are many people who love you, are there not?"

"My relations—some of them—do, of course; but—I really

never for an instant imagined you—you—thought about me in this way," said Jemima helplessly.

"And now that you know that I do think of you in this way?"

There was distress in Jemima's face; the eyes raised to her suitor's face were full of trouble.

"I couldn't Doctor Sclater; I really could *not*. It is a very great honour to an ignorant girl like me to have such a clever person as yourself like me so much; but——"

"You cannot return the—the liking?"

"I do like you immensely; but not in the way you mean. I should like to have you always for a friend, Doctor Sclater"—the girl was recovering her composure—"but I cannot be your wife."

There was a minute—a very long minute it seemed to Jemima—of silence. Then the Doctor said gently:

"My friendship will always be yours, but—will you not take a little time for consideration before giving me a final dismissal? I have taken you by surprise."

"My answer would be the same, even if I delayed giving it. I am so sorry; I hope you do not mind very much."

"That wish is very sweet and gentle of you, though I 'mind' more than you can imagine. Good-bye."

The Doctor appeared at Lady Gorreston's side presently, and joined, though a little abstractedly, in the conversation going on in the little group that always gathered round the old lady. She was an excellent talker, and an even better listener; and was eminently pleasant and restful to the beholder, in her grey velvet gown with its draperies of white lace.

"I regret," said the Doctor presently, "that circumstances compel me to return home to-morrow. I have had a delightful time at Gorreston; it will always be one of my dearest memories."

The old lady's swift glance was keen.

"Are you *quite* sure that it is necessary to cut your visit short?" she asked meaningly.

"Quite. What a very charming young lady Miss Trevyck is! There is none of the coquetry and insincerity one finds now and then in girls of her age. She has all the delightful frankness of a child."

"She is the kind of woman who will always have something of the child about her." The speaker recognised a note of pain in the man's voice and was sorry for him, and he knew it.

Jemima was glad to find herself alone in the Elizabeth Chamber that night. So much seemed to have happened; so many new interests to have pressed upon her during this Gorreston visit; and now, she had received her first offer of marriage! She looked at herself critically in the great mirror over her dressing-table, and wondered what had made a grave middle-aged man, with a taste for learned studies, have such a liking for her.

"He will soon forget all about it, I expect," she said to herself with the happy optimism of youth; and drawing a great easy-chair before the fire, arranged the cushions comfortably about herself, and sat down to dream.

The room was a very large one; the great carved bedstead seemed a long way off. The walls were panelled from floor to ceiling; the light of the many candles made flickering gleams like watching eyes appear in the polished depths of the wood. It was a stately-looking chamber, and Jemima admired it greatly; she would have liked to banish the portrait over the mantelpiece, though. The long narrow face with its cruel mouth and crafty half-closed eyes repelled the girl exceedingly.

There were only two pictures in the room; Elizabeth's portrait and the full-length portrait of a gallant gentleman in all the elaborate finery of Tudor days. His name, "Sir Felix Gorreston of Gorreston," appeared on a plate at the bottom of the frame. His laughing black eyes seemed twinkling with mirth in the candlelight. The picture was a very large one, sunk into the panelling, not at all a suitable picture for a sleeping apartment, thought the girl, as the flickering lights gave momentarily fresh expression to the face. One hand, half-hidden by the lace ruffle, was on the hilt of his sword; Sir Felix was, no doubt, a roystering blade in his time. Jemima resolved to ask John about him on the morrow as she rose at length to go to bed.

The house was very still when presently the girl awoke with a start from a dreamless sleep. That is—she *thought* she awoke from sleep; but Jemima, telling the story, is never quite sure whether she dreamt of the awaking or not. The fire had quite died down, but the room was full of moonlight from the windows overlooking the rose garden. She felt extraordinarily wide awake.

Jemima, taking a satisfied survey of her surroundings from among her pillows, became aware of something unusual in the atmosphere of the room, of a strange odour of damp and mustiness. She sat up and looked at the most distant window. It was open, the curtains that she had drawn back before going to bed moved softly in the night air. Then her eyes fell upon the wall to the right of the fireplace, where from his carved frame the laughing face of Sir Felix had looked out upon her. She could see nothing of the picture. A pool of moonlight lay across the floor, but beyond was a blackness uncanny in its density.

On the table beside her bed lay matches; the girl groped for them and lit a candle; then held it up and bent forward, straining her eyes in her effort to pierce the shadows. Where the picture had hung was a huge, black, oblong empty space. Sir Felix had vanished.

(To be continued.)

A Legend of the Lark.

Up goes the lark into the skies !
At Heaven's gate aloud he cries
The prayer he sings through centuries.

" At last to-day I Heaven win !
Lift up, O Gates, and let me in,
Lest back to earth be back to sin.

" No blasphemy shall soil my ways
My joy to pass my sunny days
In singing to my Maker's praise !"

Alas ! still closed the golden door,
Hope fails that glad his wings upbore,
Perforce he sinks to earth once more.

The impulsion of his airy flight
Gives him the strength to gain a height
Where earth is almost out of sight.

Failing the goal yet to attain,
'Tis something that he upward strain
Between the Heaven and the plain.

Thus loosed from what it prized before
The soul may freely upward soar
To hearken at God's golden door.

The sweetest of his minstrelsy
Learnt where he poises airily,
Remains his own eternally.

And though needs must to earth again,
His life's long night shall still retain
The echo of celestial strain.

M. ST. JEROME.

Yesterday and To-day in Tyrol.

A Memory of Our Lady's "Festa."

HARDLY a time for dreaming—these stern days of war and want, when hearts are heavy and heads are full of anxious thoughts, and the wished-for to-morrow that shall bring us peace with victory, seems so long in coming. Yet even in these times, one's thoughts go back to the peaceful past in a South Tyrolean village, with its little white houses, and soaring campanile that dominates the valley of Ampezzo so majestically. And round about stand the fantastic Dolomite peaks jagged spires against the deep blue sky, and down the valley, in the magical distance, beckon the glorious summits of the Venetian Alps.

Yes, mid-August is a good time to find oneself in Cortina d'Ampezzo, for it is the Assumption, and from far and near, the picturesque peasant-folk troop in to the Mass that will be sung so heartily at the village church. From many a remote mountain hamlet—where church there is none—do they fare, their sunburnt faces wrinkled with toil, the women gay with bright-coloured aprons and kerchiefs, for here dress takes on an Italian fashion and hue ; we are only a mile or two from the frontier of Italy.

What though the yellow and black flag of Austria flies from the Municipality, it is essentially an Italian community it legislates for, and it is the soft Venetian dialect that you hear, as you pass the scattered groups of church-goers. The loiterers will have to hurry up, or they will never get in. Our Lady's feasts are kept in Cortina with a devotion which is unceasing, and lower down in the meadows, is her own little shrine of Madonna della Neve, which is much too small for the congregation on a holiday of obligation (as the Assumption was in those days). In they swarm, till the nave is crammed to suffocation—there is no "County Council" here to object to filling up the gangways, and the late-comers are lucky if they can find standing-room !

Not much to boast of, perhaps, has the church in the way of decorations, for the flowers that deck the altars are crudely artificial, and there is little to see in the way of artistic ornament ; you don't come to Tyrol for the fine arts ! No, but you find something far better ; here in this mountain sanctuary is the true and solid devotion which prays and gives thanks with a whole-hearted energy which vibrates in the resonant peasant-voices, as they chant the responses, and you feel as you listen that you never heard "congregational singing" before till you came to Cortina. A good many of the older ladies in the congregation are by this, however, dozing peacefully on the stone floor, with their tired backs against the benches—if unable to get a seat, at least they will

indulge in a nap! All the women have religiously removed their hats and hung them up on the nails provided on each bench, for in Tyrol all head-gear is doffed in church—in curious contrast to the universal fashion of covering the head there.

The village school-children, their brown faces shining from soap and water, and amazingly tidy in their Sunday clothes, are ranged all in front, close up to the altar-rails, whence the *padre* emerges every now and then to bestow a sounding box on the ear to any youngster who is caught laughing or whispering—for they teach reverence early to their flock.

But see, the Mass is over, and out into the street pour the worshippers, for the whole village is agog with excitement; they do not have a *festa* every day, and they mean to keep it in royal style. Even the little road-side shrines are gay with field-flowers, and the houses are decorated with fir trees—the favourite form of ornamentation where bunting is absent. For flags are a luxury, it must be remembered, in Cortina, and the whole village wants to show its festal frame of mind.

No need to shut up the shops—they are already closed, but it is time for *pranzo*—as the Italians call it—and *pranzo* is a function that takes time, for you don't hurry over dinner in South Tyrol! You must wait till you get back to England or Ireland, for, to do them justice, there is still time to take things leisurely in Tyrol, and therefore properly. So you take time for dinner; consequently with that meal to get in, and the midday nap that your true Italian is always glad to work in, it is two o'clock ere the villagers stir outside again, and then it is for Vespers. For Our Lady's Feast, every one must go to Church twice, as a point of devotional honour, so to speak, and hundreds of voices chant the Litany of Loretto *con amore*, till with Benediction the devotions for the day are over.

But now the amusements begin in earnest—religious duties fulfilled, “smokes” and games of bowls and rifle targets are freely indulged in, and the women-folk enjoy a hearty good gossip ere they set out on the return journey—many of them tramping miles in the sun to get to the *festa* at headquarters. If you want to turn your back on the homely rejoicings, you can stroll across the hill-pastures, where the purple crocuses are starring the grass, and watch the limestone peaks that girdle that enchanting valley, glow rose and gold in the setting sun, till you wonder if there can possibly be any spot on God's earth more enchantingly beautiful than this mountain valley, so far from the tumults of our modern civilisation, while the magic panorama of light and colour changes to ever more gorgeous revelations. Solemn and majestic grow the mountain-spires as evening falls, and the hush of night broods over the valley, while the harvest moon rises in her mellow beauty, and down in the village the chalêts twinkle with little lights.

Presently the campanile itself will radiate lights, for it will be illuminated, and as a final conclusion to the day, will come

the grand firework display that to the Italian mind is the necessary crowning *coup* to a *festa*. Truly, there is no accounting for tastes—even in the fairest of Tyrolean valleys; squibs and crackers and bengal lights are an incongruous “jar” on eye and ear alike; but they satisfy the good folk of Ampezzo, and surely Our Lady will look kindly on these pyrotechnics, blatantly noisy as they be, for are they not done in her honour? And so the lights go out one by one, and the weary holiday-makers stream homewards, and the village sleeps once more under the shadow of those watching mountains, while only the stars are awake.

So short a while since was the Feast of Our Lady kept in the valley: alas, with what shorn rites will it be observed this year! For the Ampezzothal—it will soon be called by its Italian name, as far as we can see—is a battle-ground, and there is a redder stain to-day on its pastures than any sunset ever shed on those hills. The once light-hearted peasant-women are already mourning their loved ones, dead or absent, and the sounds of merry-making are strangely hushed in that once happy valley. Only the noises of war are heard there now—the grim rumble of artillery and the crackle of firing, while the soldiers wait the word of command that shall call them to action.

Never could the horrors of war be more pathetically brought home than in this Tyrolean valley, for here Austrians and Italians have dwelt as brothers for long years, the far-off memories of ancient feuds fading in the happy communal life that has hitherto knit both nationalities into the unity of common social and commercial interests. Nay, so merged have been the two, that, while at one end of the village, you would hear the German idiom, at the Italian end it would be the dialect of Venezia that met you on all sides. It was one of the saddest leave-takings surely, that the war has seen, when the Austrian and Italian customs-officers shook hands for the last time a few weeks back, after years of fraternal amity, henceforth to range themselves in opposing ranks! But such is the irony of War!

Ampezzo was ever half Italian: now it will be wholly so probably, and who knows, with the victory that is already blessing the Italian arms, the great forest of San Marco, with the mountain-peaks it fringes will once more be Italian territory for good and all. Meantime, the thoughts of many an English and Irish tourist, who in the past have fleeted their holiday-hours in that fairest of valleys, will go out in sympathy to its brave peasant-folk, plunged into the heart of a conflict that they had no share in provoking.

And Our Lady's Feast will be kept perhaps with greater devotion in Cortina, though with little outward demonstration, than ever, as her clients kneel to implore that peace which she can obtain for them from her Divine Son.

The Assumption seems a Feast specially identified with

the thoughts of peace, and this year Irish and Italian hearts will be united in the same prayer:

Mother of peace, we pray,
Since thou within thine arms
The Lord of Peace didst bear,
Help those who fear to-day,
Ringed round by War's alarms,
In thy sweet peace to share!

M. A. V.

The Pernicious Literature Peril.

THE awful European campaign of slaughter tends to overshadow the efforts being made in parts of this country to unfasten the insidious hold which demoralising reading-matter has slowly gained in our midst. The workers in this field of honour might freely be forgiven did they suffer now and again from downheartedness, for theirs is a difficult and a thankless task—in so far as thanks is reckoned in the currency of this world. And it is a field where the limelight shines most intermittently or hardly at all.

At a meeting of the Dublin Vigilance Committee held a short while ago, it was suggested that one of the best ways of helping on the good cause of the crusade against the circulation of degrading and injurious publications in Ireland would be a series of articles in a good Catholic journal. However, the people who read these same good Catholic journals are not altogether those whom the Vigilance Committees have set themselves out to influence, for they show in their choice of current periodicals that they are not of the number who can tell the difference between the wheat and the tares. But of course by keeping on firing one often hits targets that he had not originally hoped to strike. Still, it is rather to the secular press of the country that appeal needs to be made, and unfortunately in dealing with a good proportion of that same press the advocate of the clean and moral in present-day prints is too often crying in the wilderness.

Along with our generally smug feeling that things are well enough as they stand, and that some people are very much inclined to make volcanoes out of smouldering embers, we have a sort of objection to being what we call preached at. There even still survives in some peculiar minds that slumbering dog in the manger that wakes up drowsily now and again to snarl something about liberty of conscience. But one should turn to that debate of Dr. Johnson's on free-will. "Sir," he concluded, "we *know* our will is free, and *there's* an end on't." We know our conscience is our own affair,

but we also know that the most dangerous criminal has generally the greatest feeling of detestation and grievance against the laws which exist for the protection of the property and liberty of his fellow-man. We are quite aware that our will is perfectly free, though we have a very distinct dislike to being reminded that we have abused that freedom. Carry the free-will theory to its natural length, and how can you interfere with the freedom of the drunkard, the would-be suicide? There are oceans of difference between liberty and licence, though some who regard themselves as skilled navigators think they are sailing over the waters of the former when in reality they are in the troubled seas of the latter. It takes a storm to make them realise their error—and even then they blame the compass!

The apathy—and sometimes worse—of a large section of the Irish press on the question of the clean literature campaign is indeed surprising. One provincial editor printed a notification to the effect that he would be very pleased to give space to notices of books and periodicals sent him for review. Yet he had not even the courtesy—to put the matter on no higher plane—even to acknowledge the receipt of a publication which was sent him regularly for months afterwards. A paper taking for its motto "Truth conquers" might reasonably be expected to let its readers know of the existence of journals which place the truth in the foreground of their literary dishes, and yet it preferred stony silence to even the veriest minimum of publicity. Our local organs seem so desperately anxious to report every word that falls from the lips of Poor Law Guardian and District Councillor that they have often little space for anything else. Surely, in this reading age, they might well substitute a little in the way of elevating literature, or even finger-posts pointing to where such reading-matter might be found, in the room of some of the verbatim accounts of the often long-winded platitudes of local representatives?

It is not only the organs which batten on the scourgings of the Divorce Court sewers that need elimination from our midst, and which are fortunately almost confined to the large towns. Nevertheless, it is surprising what a number of these papers find their way even to the West of Ireland, through the medium of sons and fathers working in the industrial and agricultural areas of England. The writing of a weekly letter home is a shirked ordeal, and so a weekly paper is frequently substituted—often a paper which relies not so much on news proper, as on graphic accounts of murders and lengthy reports of the doings in the courts. One would have fancied that nowadays the war would have ousted these features from almost every paper, but it has not—with more than one organ other less "spicy" items have made room for war news while space is still found for garbage of a sickening type.

But the class of periodical needing replacement is the scrappy production which appeals to readers of less than average intelligence. The normal Irish reader can appreciate matter requiring a share of thought, and one of the difficulties

facing those who work in the interests of wholesome publications is to place such reading before him. The periodicals of the right type are there, but somehow the readers are not always. There is likewise a danger from literature of the alleged "unsectarian" type which cloaks its insidiousness under the guise of broadmindedness, and often sows the seeds which later on develops into an unhealthy plant. As Canon O'Leary says: "There is a regular tornado of atheism sweeping over the world, darkening the world, and bringing down a black cloud upon the world."

Some little time ago I happened to be in a certain village on a Saturday evening. At the hotel I came across an English commercial traveller who was bemoaning his fate, as he had to spend the week-end in the place. "Ah, well," he consoled himself, "There'll be plenty of time to read the papers in any case, and there'll be a full account of that East London murder trial. By the way, what time do we get the newspapers here to-morrow?" I told him he would get no paper on the morrow in that part of the world, and his "What!" was a choice illustration of the amount of surprised disappointment which can sometimes be compressed into a single word. Then he told me how he had looked forward to spending a good part of the Sunday in bed, reading the details of the London murder trial! Let us hope that we are far removed from the prevalence of that type of outlook on life in this country, and that we may ever remain far from it.

There is a good deal of bravado connected with the reading-matter of some people, though one may feel surprise on discovering the fact. Many folk fear to be seen reading a periodical which their more "manly" friends might dub goody-goody. Where, exactly, the "courage" comes in, in reading prints of questionable taste, would be difficult to discover, yet the fact remains that some not over-deep minds are influenced by prevalent custom to peruse journals that their better nature persists in condemning. There was a clique of young men in Dublin some years ago, with declared intellectual and literary pretensions, and among them one of the city evening papers, and one alone, found favour and support. A member of that particular fraternity simply had to read the favoured print—"it was so literary, don't you know!" They regarded the other evening journals with an even greater repugnance than your foppish young man, who lives in a never-ending inhalation of Turkish cigarette smoke, regards the more democratic brands of cigarettes. So, if you wish to move in a circle which reads a certain print that gives simply top-notch tips for all the race-meetings—well, you've simply got to study that paper or leave the circle. We are so sheep-like after all. Let but some individual with the requisite amount of audacity set up to dictate to us, to set the fashion in any direction he chooses, and we are prepared to follow him as unquestionably as the woolly quadrupeds follow the bell-wether.

For ultimate good or ill, this is a reading age, and it is well to remember that if the reading public is not supplied with what is good, then it will devour whatever comes to hand. With the weakness of our nature leaving us prone to what is far from the best in any phase of life, and with the often greater persistence and ingenuity of the suppliers of literary rubbish, it is an uphill struggle for the purveyors of good literature—so many people seem too shy to push the sale of Catholic journals. The tastes formed in early age are the tastes that linger, so it devolves on all those responsible for the forming of the habits of youth to have an especial eye to ensure that the matter read is not only not injurious, but such as will help the growth of the taste for reading—that taste implying that nothing but what is worth reading shall be touched. And surely in the basket of literature there are enough ripe and healthy fruits to leave no excuse for meddling with the over-ripe or speckled ones? Still, one remembers that most small boys prefer green apples—until experience and the parental lecture show them their error.

THOMAS KELLY.

BOOK NOTES.

"**Prayers of the Gael**" (London and Edinburgh: Sands and Co.; price 1/6) are translations, mostly in verse, some in prose, of prayers in common use among the Irish-speaking people of Ireland: "a people who have never lost 'the visionary gleam.'" There are over a hundred of them, all instinct—even in their English dress—with that intense and vivid faith which their native language seems, under God, to have been the chief means of preserving to the Irish people. A mere glance at these prayers, mostly traditional and anonymous, the product of the people themselves, will show them to be utterly unlike those too frequently found in devotional books nowadays: an unlikeness which is a testimony to their superiority. Let us hope that most readers will not be satisfied with a mere glance, but will grow to love and use them, finding in them, like the humble folk from whose lips they have been gathered, "consolation and strength to meet the temptations and trials of their daily lives."

"**Domestic Virtues**," by Rev. G. Hungerford Pollen, S.J. ("Messenger" Series), is a clear and telling, though brief, study, which will well repay perusal, of some of those virtues, natural and supernatural, that are essential to the life of the Christian family and are unfortunately in danger of being ignored or forgotten in the rush and hurry of our latter-day existence.



A Literary Circle For Young Readers of "The Cross."

Conducted by FRANCIS.

RULES OF THE GUILD.

- I. The Guild of Blessed Gabriel is a literary circle open to boys and girls under 18 years of age.
- II. The members will be expected to spread devotion to Blessed Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, by practising the virtues of purity, charity and truth; and by living lives worthy of him who is to be their model and guide.
- III. They will at all times observe the conditions under which the competitions will be held.
- IV. They will endeavour to bring as many new members as they can into the Guild of Blessed Gabriel.

A GOOD and holy priest cheers my heart this month with a message of praise and congratulation. In the course of a letter he writes:—"I trust I am not flattering you when I say that your pages in THE CROSS are simply charming; so bright and elevating, and so captivating for the young people! Long may you be spared to use your pen and mind in such a noble cause!" Now, a message like that is heartening and helpful, and I am deeply grateful for the thought which prompted the sender to set it down on paper.

There is hardly any help we can give one another that is so satisfying or so welcome as a cheery, sympathetic, encouraging word. It beautifies and chastens success, lightens sorrow, transforms failure and in the hour of doubt and despondency it makes us lift our gaze from the shadows and place it on the sun-crowned heights where the glory of God's mercy never wanes, where there is solace and healing for all the trials and crosses of this strange world of ours. Give the cheery word always, my dear boys and girls, and a day will surely dawn when the loan will be returned to you with interest at the rate of a thousand per cent. It costs not a farthing, but it is

more precious than gold or jewels to those who are struggling upward towards the eternal hills of God.

In spite of the holidays, of the breaking up of school, and of several other distracting circumstances, **My Post Bag.** my post bag this month is almost, if not quite, as full as usual, and the contents are as interesting as ever. A long letter from my dear and loyal friend, **Lilian Mary Nally** is one of the first to meet my gaze, and I need hardly say that it holds for me a very great measure of delight. "I am not attempting this month's competition," she writes. "I could never write on such a grand subject, but I will tell you my favourite characters—they are Portia and Sidney Carton. 'Tis a far, far better thing I do than I have ever done before; 'tis a far, far better rest I go to than I have ever known.' And as for Portia, what a brave, noble, eloquent woman she was! How sweetly and truly she spoke of the noble quality of mercy. Alas! dear Francis, I am only a commonplace little scribbler, and I dare not attempt to write on such beautiful characters." And yet, who knows? Lilian may one day portray characters as beautiful and as noble—children, too, of our own dear land of romance that has given birth to so many kingly men and women unsurpassed by any in all the world. **Florrie Burke** from England can hardly choose words strong enough to express her admiration of the Promoter's Badge won by her last month. "Many, many thanks" is what she says, "for the pretty badge you sent and which arrived this morning. I was over-joyed, for I certainly did not think it would be as pretty as that. Kathleen Gaffney, one of my recruits, has started to try to get five now, and between us we have determined to make Slough a very CROSS town." I am quite sure that Florrie and her comrades will not allow it to become a Slough of Despond at all events. From **Mary Agnes Paden**, who lives near Hull, comes another letter across the sea. She is delighted that she has discovered THE CROSS and the Guild. "Ah! that I had known about your beautiful book and Guild before!" she says. "This is exactly what I have been looking for, for some time past, and I am so pleased to have discovered THE CROSS. Of course now I have seen it I shall take it regularly." And from a long and extremely well-written letter I glean the pleasant tidings that this new friend of ours, to whom we offer a warm Irish welcome, has allowed her holidays to go by the board in order, during her mother's illness, to bake and boil and sew and care for the rest of the family. All the members will pray that her mother may soon be strong and well again, and that Mary Agnes may reap a rich reward for her unselfishness. **Josephine Cassells** is a new Dublin member who is anxious to share in our work and play, and it is with pleasure I bid her a hearty welcome. She and her mother and sisters look upon THE CROSS as their favourite magazine. Another Dublin girl who wants to come and sit in our midst is **Eva Sullivan**, and I welcome her right

heartily. Her letter on the holiday she spent by the seaside once upon a time shows promise of excellent future work. **Brigid Trainor** sends enthusiastic thanks for her prize volume which is the nicest she has ever seen, and **Francis Kiernan**, last month's senior prize-winner, praises his trophy in eloquent language. **Kathleen Gaffney**, another of last month's winners, chimes in with a high eulogy of her own beautiful volume. While not to be outdone by anybody, **Agnes Byrne** says that she was suffering great pain with a severe toothache when her prize arrived, but her joy at seeing the delightful book chased away nearly every pang. It is well to know that the prize volumes give so much satisfaction. My old friend, **Chrissie Burke**, sends me three additional recruits this month, and thus qualifies for a promoter's badge, which she has long desired. The names of the members she has brought me are **Eileen Lennon**, **Maggie Kavanagh**, and **Bridie Byrne**. They are heartily welcome. From a little English girl, **Marjory Deverill**, comes a nice, simple letter which has made me very glad and for which I thank her most sincerely. She asks the prayers of all the members for a very special intention, and I trust every member will respond to her request. The realisation of her wish would, I am sure, give joy to Blessed Gabriel in Heaven. To her brother Herbert I extend a warm welcome. **Bridie Gildea** is our latest recruit from "dark Donegal," and I need hardly say she is welcome. She encloses in her letter a P.O. for 3s. towards the expenses of the Beatification of Gemma Galgani, which I am handing to the Editor. A cheery letter comes to me from **Eily Barrett**, who is one of the most loyal and active members in the Guild. I am very grateful for her kind words and good wishes. Last, but by no means least, I find in the bottom of my post bag a sweet little letter from a sweet little girl whose name is **Adele MacCabe**, who has heard all about us from Lilian Mary Nally and wants to find a place in our midst. She is welcome for her friend's sake and for her own, and I trust she will spend many a pleasant hour in the Guild of Blessed Gabriel.

The pretty badge, bearing the portrait of Blessed Gabriel, which is awarded to the member who brings five new recruits into the Guild, goes this month to **Chrissie Burke**, 8 Oxford Road, Ranelagh, Dublin.

A Badge Winner.

All newcomers will please write a personal note to FRANCIS, apart from their competition papers, asking to be admitted to membership of the Guild.

Important.

For the best essay on "My Favourite Character in Fiction," the prize is awarded to **Joe Power**, 114 Rock Street, Tralee, County Kerry, whose fine paper does her credit. I was well pleased with the papers sent in by **Chrissie Burke**, **Michael Kelly**,

Marjory Deverill, **Eily Barrett**, **Nellie Maguire**, **Martin Fagan**, **Tillie Maguire**, **Lucy Walsh**, **Agnes Doran**, and **Bernard Keely**.

For the best letter on "A Day at the Seaside," the prize goes to **Eva Sullivan**, 9 Edward Terrace, Ballybough Road, Dublin, who wrote a very creditable account of a boarding school excursion to the sea. I have pleasure in giving honourable mention to the letters sent by **Herbert Deverill**, **Brigid Trainor**, **Maggie Kavanagh**, **Maureen O'Brien**, **Bridie Byrne**, **Eileen Lennon**, **John Markey**, **Kitty Moore**, **Andrew Hogan**, **Mollie Flynn**, and **Dick Morgan**.

OUR NEXT COMPETITION.

I. For Members over 12 and under 18 years of age.

A handsome book prize is offered for the best letter on "My Home and Its Surroundings." This is a subject that should appeal to all.

II. For Members under 12 years of age.

A handsome book prize is offered for the best little letter on the same subject as above, viz., "My Home and Its Surroundings."

All competition papers must be certified by some responsible person as being the unaided work of the competitors. They must have attached to them the coupon which will be found in this issue (one coupon will be sufficient for all the members of a family) and must be written on **one side only** of the paper. They must be sent to the Office of the THE CROSS not later than August 14th. All letters to be addressed:—**FRANCIS**, c/o THE CROSS, St. Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin.

PRIZE ESSAY.

"MY FAVOURITE CHARACTER IN FICTION."

Fair and wonderful, the shadowy images of a dreamer's fancy, transformed by his golden thought into those strange, realistic beings that are "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever," rise before the eyes of imagination, each holding out the subtle seductiveness of its own peculiar, individual charm, and with its dumb lips mutely clamouring for preference. It seems, indeed, a hopeless task to choose the richest gem among a "Wealth of Nations," such as Adam Smith never dreamed of. The figures of the mythical heroes and heroines of antiquity, fair ladies and chivalrous knights of mediaeval times, Shakespeare's "gallery of noble women," ay, and of the valiant men, flit by me, wondrous, alluring in all the beauty of soul received from a master mind. But my wondering gaze is arrested at sight of one of that vast modern multitude created out of nothingness and endowed with life in this our day. Debarred from the attraction of old-world romance, the irreproachable respectability conferred by the hall-mark of success is also denied him. An utter and irretrievable failure, a social outcast, as the world judges men, such is **Frank Guisely**, the hero of **Father Benson's** novel, "None Other Gods."

From our first introduction to **Frank**, we cannot help suspecting that boundless possibilities lie concealed beneath his playful veneer of langour and in-

dolence. Such is indeed the case. A disposition naturally inclined towards "the noble and the good" is suddenly awakened by its contact with Catholicity, to a consciousness of the awful and sublime responsibilities of the human soul. Henceforward, an admirable spirit of self-sacrifice, artfully concealed under an assumption of defiant indifference, permeates all his actions. With characteristic impetuosity, he abandons his worldly prospects, and his future history is epitomised in his Quixotic endeavour to save from the consequences of her folly, a weak-minded girl who has failed to inspire him with affection, or even respect. A strong will bears him triumphantly through the manifold trials attendant on his voluntary poverty, and enables him to contemplate with equanimity the irony of fate which snatches him from life at the moment when its prospects seem most alluring. His apparent lack of religious fervour is at first a sore disappointment to us, but it would be unreasonable to expect the erstwhile Frank's attitude of good-humoured scepticism to be suddenly replaced by a pious austerity of mind reminiscent of the hermits of bygone ages. This practical young man's Catholicism is essentially modern in tone, and if his view of religion savours apparently rather of materialism than of spiritualism, it is because he possesses a species of reserve which shrinks from unnecessary self-revelation.

His death is in accordance with his life. Under ordinary circumstances, we fail to discern the heroic element in a vulgar brawl, with fatal termination; and here we bend the knee in lowly reverence before what may not inaptly be styled "the triumph of failure." It is the ruling passion, or rather the ruling virtue, strong in death. Let the world sneer as it will, in passing that lowly pallet; we, who are taught by faith a deeper penetration, feel that the Christ who promised that a cup of cold water given in His name shall not go unrewarded, will bestow a recompense exceeding great on the humble disciple who, as the Apostles of old, left all things to follow in the blood-marked footprints of his Crucified Master.

JOE POWER.

In Thanksgiving, &c.

Anon (per Mrs. R. Sheehy, London) sends two-and-sixpence towards expenses of the Cause of Gemma Galgani in thanksgiving for temporal favours received through her intercession.

Bridie Gildea (Donegal), per **Francis**, sends three shillings towards the expenses of the Beatification of Gemma Galgani.

A.G. (Glasgow) sends two-and-sixpence towards the Cause of Blessed Gabriel in thanksgiving for favours received.

Mrs. M. Walsh (Dublin) desires to express her most grateful thanks to St. Paul of the Cross for a favour received through his intercession during the Octave of his festival, and promises in thanksgiving to say three Hail Marys every day in his honour as long as she lives.

The above donations, for which we are sincerely grateful, will be duly forwarded to the Postulator at Rome.

Contributions towards the expenses of the Causes of Blessed Gabriel and Gemma Galgani and favours received through their intercession will be gladly acknowledged in these pages.

TO OUR PROMOTERS.—In answer to inquiries made from time to time we think it well to let supporters of this magazine know that all our supporters and promoters participate in the benefit of four hundred and thirty-four Masses, specially offered every year for benefactors by the Fathers of this province, as well as in the prayers, penances and good works performed daily by all the members of the Congregation of the Passion.